

Knowing You

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The Characters:

Elizabeth Frederickson: Late 50s. Domestic Worker in Amy's guesthouse. Motherly and warm, she pays great attention to detail, whisking away any spare crumbs in a moment. Sassy, fiery, with a bit of attitude but only when provoked so not immediately apparent. A die-hard romantic who loves "Pretty Woman" and "The Prince and Me." Clearly beautiful in her youth, still likes to secretly smoke a cigarette and read steamy novels when she's not completing her extremely long shifts. A highly gifted storyteller.

Rowland: Mid 20s. Explorer, Rider Haggard like figure. Tall, muscled and blonde, he is intensely aware of his excellent physique and takes great pains to develop it. Strong extrovert to the point of abrasion, cannot let his opinions go unheard, loves to argue. Always up for an adventure. Often snapping photos for "future use" even at inopportune times. Big ego, still more boy than man. Glorified frat brother with the best of intentions (from his point of view). Great womanizer, he is hungry for female attention, the more the better. Rowland is on a mission (as an explorer investigating the new African frontier). As such he should be free to wander and sit at the corners of the other scenes, unobtrusively recording and "taking notes" on the other character's behavior.

Melanie/Outsider: Mid 20s. Springs from a box in her mother's memory, often feels invisible. Doesn't live "around here", doesn't speak. Like Michael K she lives outside the system except when Rowland gives her a way in. Melanie is beautiful and very fashionable; she looks after her weight and make-up. She was a champion ballroom dancer and a model in her youth and is proud of that fact. Her biggest weakness is Rowland.

Mundi: Early 20s. Boyish, beautiful, with a sweet face. Big dreams but weighted down by the burdens of family, money, the world. Wants to build his own house, have a small family with the love of his life. Interested in nature, ecology and the life cycle. Comfortable just "hanging out" on a Saturday night. Prefers to watch on the outside to participating. He is a good listener with intense eyes that pierce his observation. A healer, he has a special talent for reading people's bodies, histories and health both mental and physical.

Amy: Early 20s. A student living outside her comfort zone. Communicates best in letter form. Big heart. Loves to make eye contact when she greets people. Loyal to her family, longs for them and to create her own. Constantly looking, asking questions, a bit naïve, especially at the beginning. Passionate, wants to do something *good* in the world. Excited about most things. Tends to cry easily when happy or sad. Affectionately self-critical.

Police Officer/V.O.: Late 50s. Large, burly, and bald. Extremely intimidating and knows it. Frustrated with the amount of crime he faces daily with no perceived improvement.

Olga/Sorter: Early 50s. House landlord. Elegantly dressed. Grew up under Apartheid and still sees the world through that lens. Intensely fears loss of control.

1.) Welcome to Africa

[As Audience enters Elizabeth sits already onstage outlining in pencil on an easel and pad of paper the entire African continent. A large box sits center stage behind her. “In the Jungle,” or “Mbube” (the original version) plays. As the audience takes their seats, the lights change. Elizabeth pauses, surveys her handiwork then slowly, carefully, erases the entire thing.]

Amy, Rowland, Mundi, the P.O., Olga and Elizabeth enter to a circle. They sing the Cell Phone Song.]

Ensemble:

Andikuthandi selul’andikufuni
Wen’ uchith’ umzi wami
Ingxaki zezi sms

Men: Uze nes’moko jo

Uze nes’moko vodacom umjojo
Uze nes’moko MTN umjojo
Uze nes’moko cell c’yasibambisa

(Translation:

Cell phone, I don’t want you. I don’t like you.
You are breaking up my family and home.
The trouble or problem is these text messages.

Men: You have brought trouble, dude.

You have brought trouble vodacom.
You have brought trouble MTN.
You have brought trouble cell c; you are causing us to be imprisoned.)

[As they sing they begin to turn in the circle, each pulled around, equidistantly apart as if pulled by an invisible eye in the center (the box). They stop with Rowland at the front. Silence.]

He stops. He thinks. Hard. He surveys the landscape. He takes out binoculars and looks again. He stops. He takes out a pad and paper and speaks as he writes.]

Rowland: The compass of human sight is too small to take in the circumference of the whole—the soul must rest on the horrors of the widespread desert.

[He pauses, then smiles, pleased with his work. He has found the right words. He rotates forward and squats to inspect the territory further as Amy moves forward and faces front. She is incredibly excited throughout the following speech. The masturbator gives her

some pause but this is eclipsed by her pure joy to be in Africa seeing all this.]

Amy: Dear Mom and Dad,

First day in the big city. Went to the Grand Parade Market where I saw a homeless man pulled out of a shack by security and publicly beaten. Two other men ran up and started kicking him then ran away laughing. This guy passing by said: "Welcome to the real Africa."

On the way to Seapoint this little boy started poking my skin to watch the blood rush back. I think I was the first white person he'd ever seen! In the car next to me a large, fat, Afrikaans man without any pants on sat masturbating. He looked over at me and smiled. Can you believe that? Then I saw it for the first time. The ocean. Hissing and flowing into every rock. It was so beautiful, overwhelming and alive. I wanted to cry.

[She laughs at herself. She wants to cry at a lot of things. She continues.]

Write soon!

Love,
Amy

[Mundi delivers his praise poem, first in French and then in English. Even in French one is very aware that this is a carefully constructed, performed piece. This is him introducing himself to the world.]

Mundi: Je m'appelle Mundi Mustafa Isaiah. Ma famille vient du Cameroun. Mon père m'a donné son nom. Il était un policier et le neuvième de dix enfants. Il avait 8 frères et sœurs plus aînés qui sont morts. C'est pourquoi quand il est né, ils l'appellent "Mundi." Ca veut dire "Il n'y a personne." Tu vois? Cela a marché. L'ange du mort l'a laissé vivre.

My name is Mundi Mustafa Isaiah. My family comes from Cameroon. My father gave me his name. He was a police officer and the 9th of 10 children. His 8 older siblings died. That's why when he was born they called him "Mundi". It means: "No one is there." You see? It worked. The angel of death left him to live.

2.) *The Sorting/Relationships are Hard*

[A siren sounds calling the rest of the ensemble and Elizabeth out. Voice Over reads Population Registration Act and transcript from Oscar Felton's trial with Mundi as Osar Felton.

V.O.: "Population Registration Act of 1950," Statutes of the Union of South Africa, section fifteen: "white person" means a person who in appearance obviously is, or who is generally accepted as a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a coloured person...A

person who in appearance obviously is a white person shall for the purposes of this Act be presumed to be a white person until the contrary is proved.

Adv. Kruger: And I'm going to put it to you that you were well aware, you and your good little wife, that you were both really Coloured people and that you probably both looked fairly White and that you tried for White?

Oscar: I never regarded myself as a Coloured.

Adv. Kruger: I see. But you were aware that there may have been Coloured blood in you?

Oscar: The possibility, yes.

Adv. Kruger: But you in actual fact you were aware of that?

Oscar: Yes.

Adv. Kruger: But you thought well, as far as I'm concerned I'm going for White whatever my ancestry is — isn't that so?

Oscar: Well, my father was White.

Adv. Kruger: Yes, but your mother wasn't quite White?

Oscar: It happens in the best of families.

Adv. Kruger: ... You knew your mother was a Coloured woman and you wanted to break away from the Coloureds?

Oscar: No, I didn't want to because she had ... she was working for White people; she was a dressmaker.

Adv. Kruger: That's right. But you knew that she was a Coloured woman, working for White people, isn't that so?

Oscar: Yes. Well, let's put it that way, yes.

While this is read Olga and the Police Officer stand upstage as "the sorters" while the "sorted" are taken one by one (Elizabeth and Mundi included). They are made to turn around slowly. A pencil is stuck in their hair; their noses and heads are measured. They are each asked to bounce and catch a small rubber ball. Results are recorded in tiny black notebooks and then they are separated either to the left or to the right in two straight orderly lines. Mundi is marked with a Cameroonian flag pin.

During this whole sequence Rowland sits downstage totally unaware of the proceedings

behind him. He has taken out a set of tin soldiers and horses and placed them in opposing camps, Cowboy and Indian style, narrating both sides quietly to himself. As the lights shift the upstage group freezes in their two separate groups and his mumblings become audible.]

Rowland: And I said take *that* you despicable chief! We don't need any of your witchy ways here. Take your smelly cattle and go. But my family's been here for years! Oh don't want to leave so easily huh? Well take that and that!

[He pummels the other side with the first soldier, smashing them together just as lights shift to Melanie stepping out of the box center stage. Her presence is a complete and utter surprise and draws Rowland slightly out of his reverie. He looks around to see Melanie dusting herself off. She wears a bright red scarf tied around her wrist.]

Rowland: Well uh hello there Lady.

[Melanie ignores him and begins fixing her hair.]

Rowland: That was quite impressive that box trick you did. How did you fit in there?

[She continues to ignore him. She poufs her hair and starts to go as Rowland tries to stop her.]

Rowland: Are you from around here? [Beat. She starts to go again as he calls after her.] How about some gum? Minty fresh.

[She's gone, leaving Rowland behind. He thinks for a moment then smiles mischievously. He runs after her.]

Elizabeth and Amy enter. Elizabeth carries an enormous basket of water on her head and Amy the basket of clothes (in her arms). They set them down. Amy passes Elizabeth the clothes as she washes, rings them out and lays them out in the sun, very precisely.]

Elizabeth: Do you have a boyfriend? [Amy responds in the negative.] Good. Wait as long as you can. Finish school first. The butterflies? They go. I've been married to my husband 32 years and the other day I started thinking: where did the butterflies go? He goes like this now. (She snorts like a pig.) He tries to kiss me and I say, "No. You snort. I can't."

The first thing I look for in a man is his shoes. And his hands. His breath must smell nice also. Smell is so important. And politeness. My husband, he still opens doors for me.

You must spend time together. Don't let him go out with the guys on Friday nights and not call. My husband and I are good friends. (Beat) Just good friends now. We have our children of course—2 daughters---my youngest ballroom dances. Do you want to see a picture?

[She shows Amy one. A phone rings offstage. She exits. Mundi enters. Long beat. They are both clearly uncomfortable.]

Mundi: Hi.

[They begin to speak awkwardly at the same time, overlapping.]

Amy: So listen I was just about to—

Mundi: Did you get my messages?

Both Together: Sorry I—

Mundi: Please, you go first.

Amy: I was just going to say I have to get going but—

Mundi: Did you get my messages?

Amy: Yes and—

Mundi: And the beads?

Amy: Yes and they're very nice but—

Mundi: But what?

Amy: Listen. I don't even know you. You don't know me.

Mundi: I know you.

Amy: How could you? We met yesterday for ten minutes. Thank you for the gifts, they're really lovely but I have to go now okay? It was nice to meet you.

[She starts to go.]

Mundi: Your favorite color is red. [She stops but does not turn as he goes on.]
You hate airports, tourists, and people who stand on the wrong side of the escalator.
You broke your arm when you were 10 flipping over the monkey bars in your backyard.
When you were 16 you stopped eating for one whole summer and had to go to the hospital, after you collapsed swimming in the ocean.

Amy: [turning slightly] How did you—

Mundi: You love water. You were a mermaid in another life and someone put a triton

through your forehead. That's why it still crinkles inwards when you're thinking really hard. When you get passionate about something, your whole face lights up.

Amy: Anything else?

Mundi: You have a snake inside of you. Right here. [He puts one hand on his belly.] That's why your stomach hurts sometimes. Oh, and you're still hung up on this guy who broke your heart last year even though he didn't deserve your time.

[Long Beat. He is 100% correct.]

Amy: I don't know what to say.

Mundi: Can I call you?

Amy: I—uh—you know I have a lot of work to do. I have to go.

[She leaves. Mundi smiles. He knows he's breaking through. He exits.]

3.) *Getting to Know You*

Elizabeth enters to collect the baskets. She speaks to the audience as she cleans up, looking them in the eye.]

Elizabeth: I never finished.

I had to support my parents. They lived on a farm. The man didn't even pay them. He gave them food, a house, but no money. When I started working I made 45 rand per week. I kept 15 and sent the rest home. My father put the money in the bank and never spent it. He didn't know what to do with money.

The first time my parents came to the city, the Jewish family I was working for gave me the weekend off. It was still Apartheid so we couldn't go to any of the fancy white restaurants, but there was a nice one in Seapoint where they made us a reservation. My parents couldn't read so I read them the menu. Everything I said my father shouted "that one!" And I had to explain that he couldn't have everything. For them, to be in a restaurant was like (sighing) whew.

The next day I took them to the beach. They had heard of the ocean but never seen it. Can you imagine? The ocean. All that water. My parents— they were like children. I'll never forget that day.

Every year afterwards I sent for them to come. When my father died I sent for my mother. My grandmother lived and worked her whole life on that farm. My mother was not going to live like a slave in that place.

[She picks up the baskets and exits. Rowland and Melanie enter. They tango across the stage as music plays. They stop. He dips her. They tango off.]

Amy enters and delivers her letter, facing out.]

Amy: Dear J,

I've been thinking about you a lot lately. You would love it here. Every day I wake up and stand in awe at these enormous cliffs under white cloud outside my window.

I feel so free.

Last night I was sitting out with my friend, Elizabeth, under a pink blooming vine watching the stars overhead. The thing is—there's this guy here who keeps asking me out and Elizabeth asked me point blank: "Does he sweep you off your feet?"

I don't know. I'm scared. (Beat) I probably won't ever send this letter or if I do only a fragment. A big, vibrating silence remains, sending shockwaves out to wherever you are. Maybe you'll stop, washing a pot or opening a beer and suddenly think of me, you don't know why. Or maybe you'll simply turn over in your sleep and smile unconsciously. I'll never know.

Good Night. Sweet Dreams. Wherever you are.

Love,
Amy

[Lights shift and Elizabeth enters with tea things. The two women sit together having tea at a small table with white cups and saucers. They both add milk, sugar and stir counterclockwise together, same number of times. A ritual of sorts. They raise their glasses to "cheers" ironically as Melanie dressed as the Outsider walks by (same actress in different costume.)]

Elizabeth: Good Morning.

[Outsider stops briefly but doesn't really look in their direction. She puts her head down and goes.]

Elizabeth: Do you know her?

Amy: Yes. Not very well. She's in my class.

Elizabeth: She doesn't talk.

Amy: She's pretty shy.

Elizabeth: Who are her friends?

Amy: I don't know who her friends are especially.

Elizabeth: I once knew a girl just like her. Sarah. She didn't speak either. She always sat over there, alone, by the pool. The others went out on Friday nights but she just sat by herself and read. I said: "Sarah, why don't you go out with the others?" And she would smile sadly and kind of shrug. Sometimes I would sit with her, just sit, and maybe put a hand on her shoulder now and then. We didn't talk but I thought she liked having me there.

Her last day here everyone was crying. Sarah was so quiet. I went and gave her a hug and then I started to see some tears. "Write me," I said, "Here's my address. You must send me a postcard." I never heard from her again. (Beat) Why do you think she doesn't talk?

Amy: I don't know.

Elizabeth: My daughter is like her. Something happened. I'll tell you sometime. Not now. She used to sit by herself for hours not saying anything. I couldn't get her to read or even go outside for a moment. I think she was scared people would talk to her ask her things. She didn't want to talk. I tried to help—(her voice breaks. She cannot continue.)

Amy: She has the best mother. The very best.

[They hug. Lights shift to spotlight on Rowland downstage. He speaks to the audience.]

Rowland: I have a list of things to accomplish on this continent. Women are not on it. Do you know what *is* on my list?

[He pulls out a scroll a mile long; it hits the floor.]

Paragliding, parasailing, parachuting, rock climbing, sky diving, kloofing, bungi jumping, spelunking, deep sea diving, ab sailing, shark encounters, big five game drive, off-road mountain biking, lion wrangling etc...etc...

[Rowland can improvise here, his "tasks" becoming more and more fantastical. He ends. Beat.]

I'd also like to be charged by a rhino. If at all possible.

[Lights shift to Mundi and Amy, sitting cross-legged on a Persian rug. Mundi is looking through his herbs, opening and closing different bottles to smell. Amy takes in his apartment, simple but clean with a rug and small shrine/work area on one side.]

Amy: So what do you do again?

Mundi: I'm a sangoma.

Amy: A what?

Mundi: A sangoma. A healer. You might call it a witch doctor.

Amy: So you heal people—

Mundi: Through herbs and energy, also through talking. Dialogue is a big part of my work.

Amy: But you said you heal energy. What does that mean exactly?

Mundi: I don't heal energy; I use it. I direct it to different problem areas whether emotional, physical, whatever.

Amy: I see. Alright I'm ready (dramatically striking a pose) Heal me!

Mundi: I already told you, I can't heal someone until they believe in me, or they're ready to heal themselves, neither of which is true in your case.

Amy: Oh come on. Mr. Sakowsky, my doctor, says I need to have my tonsils removed. I'm ready for it, I believe. (She closes her eyes again "preparing" herself. Mundi shakes his head and sighs. She gives up.) Is there anything you can't heal?

Mundi: Yes. (He thinks. Beat.) AIDS. But for that too, I can make people feel more comfortable.

Amy: Well at least that we're agreed on. Mr. Sakowsky said he can't cure AIDS either, at least not yet.

Mundi: There's really no difference between me and your Mr. Sakowsky. The only difference is: I give you the herbs straight from the tree, he gives you yours in pill form.

Amy: You're right. You're right. I never thought about it that way before.

[He smiles. She smiles. They are finally on the same page.]

Mundi: Come on, I want to show you my leopard skin.

Amy: Your *what*?

4.) *Apartheid/A Tea Party Gone Wrong*

[They exit as Melanie and Rowland run in, music plays. They've just come in from a night out. They dance and Rowland dips her. They kiss. He starts to take off her shirt and stops; she indicates he can continue and he does.]

Excited, Rowland closes her eyes and moves her forward. He has a surprise. Standing behind her he places a necklace about her neck. With her eyes still closed he runs and excitedly picks up the mirror, which he holds in front. He nudges her slightly to open her eyes. She smiles, transfixed, and slightly scared. She has never seen her own image before. He stands. He smiles. He watches. Lights down.

Lights up on Olga and Elizabeth having tea. They enact the same ritual as before except this time Olga gets two spoonfuls of sugar while Elizabeth only gets one and Elizabeth prepares both cups. They both start to “cheers” tentatively as a phone rings offstage. Olga motions for Elizabeth to stay and exits. Elizabeth takes a deep breath. She straightens herself, poufs her hair. Tea with Olga is always awkward and she is nervous. Olga returns and picks up Elizabeth’s cup by mistake. It dawns on her immediately and a look of utter revulsion spreads across her face, which she immediately tries to cover. She places the cup down. She will not drink where black lips have been. She motions as if making an excuse. She exits.]

Elizabeth: (to the audience) I am not like the lighting. You cannot come and turn me on or turn me off. Olga comes in every morning and we must say (in a fake cheerful voice) “Hello Olga!” She just walks by. You know like a dog? Sometimes she comes and says (puckering her lips to make kissy sounds) “Oh doggie, here’s a treat,” and another day she says “Get away!” And you must run with your tail between your legs.

It’s from Apartheid. The whites, they treat us like shit. And we’re not as educated now because we couldn’t go to school. I work here every day and there’s no respect. The only reason I’m still here is so my daughter can finish.

[House lights come up and the Police Officer, Olga, Ensemble members and Rowland come out onstage dressed in their street clothes (Rowland remains in costume.) “The Lion Sleeps Tonight” by the Tokens plays, cheesy and loud. Behind them as backdrop the ensemble carries an enormous photo of a “typical” poor starving African child with bones showing, sad face, the works. The cast goes into the audience with hats to collect spare change as Rowland speaks.]

Rowland: (hawking but totally serious) Save an African child. Save an African child. Come on folks. You all have spare change. This child is malnourished, maltreated and with at least 8 diseases including African AIDS, Typhus, TB, Malaria, Ricketts, Syphilis, Chicken Pox, and Bubonic Plague. That’s right folks the plague is back and it’s in this kid. 7 years old. Come on everybody. Who wants to save a poor sick child today? Genuinely p-o-o-r, (big emphasis) *poor*. You don’t have poverty like this back home. Anyone? Anyone? This will barely cost you anything. 10 cents? 50 cents? What can you give?

[Rowland continues to riff on the audience depending on their response. If at Tufts for instance he might even comment on that as in “We’re all about active citizenship people, come on.” Eventually he calls the cast back to him with their collection. He counts the

change, takes out his wallet and ostentatiously adds a few coins, commenting the whole way. No matter how much is given he's positive. "This is a good start" etc... He ultimately pockets the money. A good day's work. He attempts to lead the audience in a round of applause for their efforts. Whether they applaud or not he still bows and exits, humming to himself. Lights down.

Spotlight up on Mundi center stage. He speaks to the audience.]

Mundi: You can't stop a criminal. Fundamentally if I want to commit a crime, I will. It's just like with healing. I can't make you see any differently if you don't want to just as I can't make you believe in me.

My father once told me: "We have two dogs within us, the good dog and the bad dog. If you feed the bad dog it will flourish and kill the good dog."

It's just human beings. Wasn't Adam told from the very beginning not to eat the fruit? And he did. Wherever there are human beings, there will be crime, and sickness.

I don't do this for the money. For me, it's a calling. I was called to do this. If I can make a positive change in one person's life, it's worth it. All you can really do is take care of yourself and make sure you're the best you can be. If you go back to where you live and each of you made a real effort to help one person, that's (he counts, depending on the house it will be different) X less criminals in the world.

[As he has been speaking, the Police Officer has crossed the stage once, doubled back, and begun to remove his jacket, preparing to come up from behind. As Mundi finishes his last word he begins to invade Mundi's personal space with light slaps on his back. Mundi does not respond and eventually raises his arms as a peace offering. The Police Officer pulls him to the ground by his arm and begins to kick the shit out of him.

Blackout as sirens sound.]

[Lights up on Amy in the interrogation room of a police station. Two chairs facing each other and a table. The police officer towers over her.]

P.O.: Are you going to press charges? We already catch them.

Amy: (still badly shaken, stuttering slightly) I—uh---I don't know.

P.O.: They broke that boy's face in Lady. He's in no condition to talk right now. Are you going to press charges?

Amy: They only took 40 rand. That's not very much money and maybe—

P.O.: If you don't press charges they will just come back and do the same thing to

someone else next time.

Amy: What would happen to them?

P.O.: Let me put it this way Lady: I don't believe in Human Rights, and these guys? They're going to wish they'd never been born.

Amy: I don't want retribution. I just want to see my boyfriend.
(It's the first time she's ever called him that and she realizes it as soon as she says it.)

P.O.: Oh your boyfriend eh? This is what happens with you tourists. You come over here and—

Amy: I am not a tourist!

[Her anger stops him. They stand glaring at each other for a moment. He relents and gestures for her to follow.]

P.O.: Right this way.

5.) *Lullaby*

[Mundi sits on the ground, bruised and holding his arm. Amy runs to him. They hug. They kiss. She examines every part of his bruised face. She breaks down. He shushes her, holds her gently.]

Mundi: Shhh....Don't cry. It's okay, it's okay. I can't stand it when you cry. I feel so stupid. I don't know what to do.

Amy: It's just so unfair. You didn't do anything to deserve this.

Mundi: Maybe it was meant to be.

Amy: Why?

Mundi: Because now I know I love you.

Amy: I don't even know what that means. That word.

Mundi: I do. It's the feeling you get when you sense you are about to get a feeling you've never felt before.

Amy: (laughing through tears) That doesn't make any sense.

Mundi: Come here.

[They hug. They freeze. A bell rings off stage. Behind Amy and Mundi, Melanie and Rowland enter, each carrying a box. They put the boxes down across from each other center stage and begin to play a game of cat and mouse. Rowland catches Melanie in his arms; they laugh together. The bell rings again. They both exit and this time Melanie brings in a box and sets it down. She touches her belly tenderly; she is pregnant and scared. Rowland enters with his box and takes her hand unaware. She puts his hand on her belly. The truth dawns on him and he stands stunned, then makes the decision and gets down on one knee to propose. The bell rings. They both exit. The bell rings. The next scene Rowland enters with a box, the sound of a baby is heard offstage. Melanie has just given birth. Rowland paces, he pulls on his hair, he decides to go see her and straightens his shoulders, “Yes, I will be a man” but at the last minute turns and leaves. Just after he leaves Melanie enters with the baby. She looks around. He is gone. She curls the baby close to her chest, protecting her. The bell rings. Melanie moves to sit on one of the boxes and rocks the baby gently by herself.]

Elizabeth enters, receives the baby from Melanie and sits. She hums her lullaby softly, rocking the baby gently to sleep.

Mundi and Amy sit with Mundi holding Amy from behind.]

Mundi: I have a lot of dreams. I want to build a house with my own two hands. I want people to work for me. I want my younger brothers to go to school like I couldn't. But mostly, I want you. I want to take you so many places.

Amy: Like where?

Mundi: Cameroon. The movies. People stare at us but it doesn't bother me anymore. I don't understand them. I don't care whether you're white, black, yellow, purple whatever. If you're human I want to know you

Amy: I know. People are stupid. Why don't you take me?

Mundi: I don't have the money. I was ashamed to tell you before. I want to give you everything but I can't.

Amy: What you give is enough.

[Beat. They sit and breathe.]

Amy: Mundi, tell me a story.

Mundi: Now?

Amy: I love it when you tell me stories.

Mundi: Alright. There once were two brothers and one wanted to be king. They fought.

One brother escaped into the village. The other went to an oracle who told him: “You must go to the village and sing, if the villagers sing back, you are the real king.” The man went to the village and sang once, twice, three times and the villagers sang back. Then the brother found his hidden brother and said: “We can rule the kingdom together.” But the other brother said: “No, you are the real king. You are my king. The kingdom should not be split.” And they lived peacefully together for the rest of their days.

Amy: I like it. Is it true?

Mundi: It is now.

[They kiss. Lights shift to Elizabeth upstage. She sings “*Isiponono*” to the baby.]

Elizabeth: (singing) Ndinesiponono saseThekwi’, Ndinesiponono saseThekwi’, Ndinesiponono saseThekwi’, Ndinesiponono saseThekwi’
Wi wi wi wi wi wi...

(Translation: I have my cutie (girlfriend); she comes from Durban.)

6.) *Things Fall Apart*

[Rowland enters to his spotlight. He is very nervous. This is an important interview. He brings his notebook, which he occasionally refers to as the voice-over speaks to him, Godlike. Before it begins, a bell rings clearly offstage.]

V.O.: Have the natives made some progress in civilization?

Rowland: Yes they have advanced but not very far. They dress in European garments and they cultivate with the plow.

V.O.: Is that all?

Rowland: Yes this is all. I may add that some possess wagons, some ride on horseback, and few drink tea and coffee.

V.O.: How little they have advanced. They might have progressed by putting aside some of their old customs which do no good.

Rowland: (eagerly interrupting) All the natives believe in witchcraft, many also believe in divination and bone throwing.

V.O.: What things help nations to rise?

Rowland: (tentatively) I may mention two.

V.O.: What are they?

Rowland: (rattling them off fiercely with pride) One is let every nation put away heathenism and accept Christianity because Christianity is light. The second would be that all children, boys and girls, should go to school.

V.O.: (trying to stump him) In former times, how did the natives produce light when they had no candles?

[This is a hard one. He thinks.]

Rowland: They used only tambookies grass for light.

V.O.: Was the house well lighted?

Rowland: Not at all. Such light was of very little use.

V.O.: What do they do in the evenings?

Rowland: They used to light a fire and sit round it.

V.O.: Did they sit up late in this way at night?

Rowland: No they went to bed early like fowls.

V.O.: What must one avoid at all costs?

Rowland: One must avoid Africa's seductions, especially its women, who will tempt towards the devil.

V.O.: What is the fate of the tempted?

Rowland: To live apart from civilization forever, a recluse in the desert.

[The bell rings again. The voice is gone. Rowland sighs in relief, takes out a handkerchief and wipes his brow. He is exhausted from the encounter. He exits, slowly.]

Melanie enters to another box and sits on it. Sound of a loud clock ticking. She is all dolled up for an evening out. She sits. Checks her watch. Sighs. She waits patiently, looking off to one side of the stage. Elizabeth enters. She stops and looks. Tentatively she places a box beside Melanie and takes her hand, places her head on her shoulder. Melanie looks at her. Elizabeth shakes her head, "No, he is not coming." Melanie smiles, pats Elizabeth's hand reassuringly. Offstage we hear the sound of a little girl "Mommy, mommy, where are you?" Elizabeth responds but Melanie ignores it, still looking off to one side.

Elizabeth exits towards the child. Melanie remains while Amy enters downstage.]

Amy: Dear Mom,

Last night I dreamt all my teeth fell out except for one or two bloody stumps.
I said: "I must get to the hospital" but you said,
"What would you do there? It's too late now."

[She touches her mouth gently.]

When I woke up my teeth were still sore.

Love,
Amy

7.) *The Choir Battle*

[Amy and Melanie exit as half the ensemble enters as a choir, Rowland at their head with a baton. He is conducting them in *The Mill Wheel*, which they sing like a dirge. He is forcing them to sing it; there is no joy in the music.]

Ensemble: The mill wheel gently turning forever sings this way. The one for whom you are burning has gone far far away. The one for whom you are burning has gone far far away.

[Offstage we hear another group singing "S'fudula abaTswana" complete with dancing and clapping. The two songs mix and compete. Rowland tries to force the choir to continue as if the other song were not there but they are listening to the other now and begin to move to the Xhosa song, drawn in by its beats. Eventually they all break out into it, defying Rowland. A revolution of joyous song and dance.]

Ensemble:

Sfudul' abaTswana S'fudula wena x2
Sigile, Sigile, Sigile...

(Translation:

We chase these people away (Botswana)
And we'll do it to you too
We bump, we bump, we bump.)

[They continue until Rowland is driven offstage, entirely overcome. Blackout. All exit.]

8.) *My Daughter Melanie*

[Melanie, Elizabeth and Amy enter with Melanie sitting behind them, waiting for Rowland on a pillow. Amy sits to one side listening (downstage) while Elizabeth faces out speaking to her but mostly the audience.]

Elizabeth: My daughter Melanie was so beautiful. Her dream was to be a ballroom dancer. (To Amy) I told you that. She used to wear these fancy blue dresses with her hair piled on top of her head. She was so beautiful.

She was with her boyfriend Rowland for two years. They started dating at the end of high school. He was her first everything: boyfriend, love. She was modeling then and kept herself very thin. Wouldn't eat potatoes, would tell her sister "Oh you're getting fat!" and would eat salads instead. So I didn't notice for a while when she started wearing baggy clothes. Didn't notice for 5 months actually. And my husband said: (angrily) "Rowland what are you going to do about that?" And he *said* he would marry her. 4 months later her little baby was born. 4 years passed by so quickly and all the time we were preparing for the wedding. Her room was full of boxes.

The Friday a week before the day of the wedding Rowland's best friend Clyde came to pay her a visit.

[The Police Officer enters as Clyde to where Melanie is sitting upstage to one side.]

Clyde: Melanie I have something to tell you.

[Beat. She looks at him questioningly. She has no idea what he's talking about. Maybe Rowland is hurt?]

Rowland was married today.

[The news hits her like a freight train in the pit of the stomach. She freezes. Clive exits. She breaks. She walks slowly over to the pillow, kneels, and begins to pound it into the ground as hard as she can. She continues until she is utterly exhausted. She rocks slowly and hits her head. She notices the scarf. She makes the decision to unravel it from her wrist; she looks at it. She exits slowly. Amy suddenly becomes aware of Melanie in her distress. She exits, running, following her. Elizabeth continues.]

Elizabeth: The next day was my granddaughter's play. Melanie and I worked for months on her dress. She was playing Snow White in the school's Spring Pageant. That day she was so excited and I said, "Run and put your dress on to show your mommy and I."

And I remember--- (she falters slightly then continues)
After I kissed her goodbye and was already at the front gate, that little girl comes running

after me:

“Ma! Ma! Give me one more kiss.”

And I bend down to give it to her, so sweet and little.

That whole day at work something didn't feel right.

I just wanted to go home until I got a phone call.

[She picks up an imaginary phone. As she speaks Melanie enters very slowly upstage, staring straight out, still carrying the red scarf.]

V.O.: Is this Elizabeth Frederickson?

Elizabeth: Yes.

V.O.: You better come right now. Something's happened with your daughter and granddaughter.

Elizabeth: I ran to the hospital all the way. I'm not a runner but I didn't even feel it.

[Amy enters at a dead run and desperately through Elizabeth's speech tries to comfort Melanie, getting no response. Amy shakes her, looks in her eyes but she is out of time. Melanie is stony faced, staring straight ahead. Her eyes are dead inside. Amy collapses on the ground, sobbing and beaten.]

Elizabeth: When I got there I saw my sons, daughters, husband, and the police. I asked Melanie, “What happened?” She just looked at me. Blank eyes. Dead inside.

[Elizabeth is in her own world now. Reliving every single moment of that day. They are all there again, the child in her arms.]

I went into the E.R. My little girl was lying there so stiff and still. Her fingers on one hand curled up tight, grasping like this (she shows us). They said she was probably grasping at the red scarf around her neck. I picked her up in my arms and held her to my chest.

“Hello Princess. Ma is here. Get up.”

[Slowly from behind Amy begins to sing, she slowly places her hand on Melanie's fist clutching the scarf, holding it gently.]

Amy: Ndinesiponono saseThekwi', Ndinesiponono saseThekwi'...

[Blackout. They exit.]

9.) *This is Good-bye*

From the darkness Mundi enters with long bamboo poles and pillows and begins to build his dream house. It is like a childhood fort. He builds diligently, shaping the invisible walls with his hands with great care. He sits. He waits.

Lights fade off of him onto Amy and Elizabeth entering together downstage. Both face front. Amy speaks to Mundi through her letter. Elizabeth speaks to the audience.]

Amy: Dear Mundi,

Last night I knew. You remember how I was sick and vomiting from what I'd seen and kept having to crawl out to the bathroom in the middle of the night? Each time I'd come back you would take me in your warm arms, bringing me into you.

I don't know.

Maybe it's the way you bury yourself in the bed sheets when I go out, like a small child, just your face poking out over the duvet. Or the way you smell in the morning after you shower, like mint and moisturizer.

Elizabeth: At night sometimes I wake up, thinking, and get up, light a cigarette, then go back to sleep. I don't want to think about these things.

Amy: Or the way you play on my body like a drum set. Or take my hand in yours when we walk, just my pinky sometimes.

Elizabeth: It's good to cry though. I cry and I feel better.

Amy: I don't want to play a role. I don't want to say things I don't mean.

I don't know what I mean but I can tell you this.

I keep dreaming. I'm standing in the ocean, sucked back and pushed forward until I lose my balance, engulfed by foam and salt. Suddenly I'm flying eyes closed, praying, that somehow, miraculously, my feet will find ground again. And so far, they always do.

Elizabeth: Some days I get up, I take my bath. I'm sitting in the water and I think:

"I don't want to go to work today." I stand outside my front gate and think:

"I don't want to go back to that place."

Amy: I keep thinking about what you said to me:

"I don't care whether you're white, black, yellow, purple whatever.

If you're human, I want to know you."

Elizabeth: You have to love your work. It's where you spend most of your life.

You have to love being there. I've been here 10 years but after you leave, I'm leaving too.

Amy: When I look in your eyes I start believing that there is something eternal in this world, and that something is in you, in all human beings.

I can't promise anything. I'm leaving today and—(she breaks)

I don't have the words.

What I can say is: I want to know you.

Love,

Amy

[The invisible wall is broken between Amy and Elizabeth. They look at each other. This is good-bye. Elizabeth takes from her pocket a large piece of folded paper. It is the African continent re-drawn. Elizabeth hands it to Amy who receives it as a gift. The women hug. They breathe together. Blackout. End of show.]

Outline and Bibliography

1.) Outline of South African and Apartheid History

First part contains a brief timeline of South African history from Khoi and San immigration, to the Dutch Colony's establishment at Table Bay in 1652. Timeline ends with Mandela's release and the first non-racial election in 1994. The second part describes the dates and content of ten key apartheid laws that accomplished racial segregation physically, economically, socially, and educationally.

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5.) Crime and Xenophobia

Discusses current crime rates in South Africa as well as alternate theories of crime as political action. This article also provides statistics on xenophobic hate crimes.

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6.) Music

There will also be a brief note on music—the names of the songs in the play, their language, and a brief history if applicable. This article will list the eleven official languages in South Africa (I have one song in isiZulu and another in isiXhosa so some language explanation is necessary).

“Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,”

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S.A. Outline

**“Apartheid” comes from the Afrikaans word for “apartness”
-Dictionary**

**“between you and me
how desperately
how it aches
how desperately it aches between you and me...
how long does it take
for a voice
to reach another**

**in this country held bleeding between us”
-Antjie Krog (Afrikaans poet) from “Country of Grief and Grace”**

I. South African History:

A.) A Brief Timeline

4th Century: Migrants from the north settle, joining indigenous San and Khoikhoi people

1652: Jan van Riebeeck representing the Dutch East India Company founds the Cape Colony at Table Bay

1806: Colony ceded to the British

1880-1881: British/Boer (Dutch) War

Mid 1880s: Gold discovered in the Transvaal causes the gold rush

1899: Second Anglo-Boer war

1910: Formation of Union of South Africa

1912: ANC Founded

1913: Land act to prevent blacks, except those living in Cape Province, from buying land outside reserves

1948: Beginning of Apartheid government

1950: Population classified by race

1970s: More than 3 million people forcibly resettled in black “homelands” or Bantustans

1976: More than 600 killed in clashes between black protestors and security during Soweto uprising

1984-89: Township revolt, state of emergency

1990: Mandela released after 27 years in prison

1994: April ANC wins first non-racial election. Mandela elected president. South Africa joins the UN after a 20-year absence.

B.) Apartheid Laws

- 1.) Natives Land Act of 1913:** Made it illegal for blacks to purchase or lease land from whites except in reserves. 71% of the population is restricted to 13.5% of the land. Reduced most sharecroppers to tenant farmers who were allowed a portion of farming results but no money.
- 2.) Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923:** Created residential segregation in urban areas, dividing the country into “prescribed” (urban) and “non-prescribed” (rural) areas. Native Advisory Boards were set up to regulate black workers’ movements between these two areas and remove any unemployed. Towns became almost all white. Only blacks allowed to live in town were domestic workers.
- 3.) Immorality Amendment Act of 1950:** Prohibited adultery and any extra-marital sexual relations between whites and blacks.
- 4.) Population Registration Act of 1950:** Every person classified by the Race Classification Board as White, Coloured, Bantu (Black African) or Other. Race reflected in person’s identity number.

“ ‘White person’ means a person who in appearance obviously is, or who is generally accepted as a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a ‘coloured person’ ”

-From Section XV of *“Population Registration Act of 1950.”*

- 5.) Group Areas Act of 1950:** Created different residential areas for different races, led to forced removals of coloureds living in District Six (an inter-racial neighborhood).
- 6.) Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act of 1952:**
Pass laws: forced blacks to carry photo, place of origin, employment record, tax payments and police record at all times. No black person could move to the city to work without a permit. People caught were tried, imprisoned or fined. All were considered guilty until proven innocent. From 1960-80, around 500,000 blacks were arrested each year. By the mid 1980s 20 million people had been arrested. Too difficult to enforce, this law was finally repealed in 1986.
- 7.) Bantu Education Act of 1953:** African schools placed under Department of Native Affairs with a uniform curriculum stressing “Bantu Culture,” basically preparing students for manual labor.

“[Educators have] misled [blacks] by showing them the green pastures of European society in which they are not allowed to graze”

–Minister of Native Affairs Hendrik Verwoerd,

Future Prime minister of South Africa (Worden 2007:106)

- 8.) Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953:** Segregation enforced in all public amenities including buildings, transport, cinemas, restaurants, and beaches. “Europeans Only” and “Non-Europeans Only” signs were installed. Different facilities did not have to be equal.
- 9.) Extension of University Education Act of 1959:** No black students allowed in white universities.
- 10.) Bantu Homelands Citizens Act:** All blacks became a citizen of their homeland (i.e. ethnic group) removing their South African citizenship entirely.

Note: Apartheid policies did not interrupt the economy. On the contrary apartheid was a system based on profit for a white elite. White living standards increased during this time as white farmers received higher produce prices and white workers benefited from racial job reservation (Worden 2007:109).

II.) Women and Labor: Domestic and Agricultural Workers in South Africa

Women's labor subsidized the apartheid system. It allowed African men to serve as cheap labor for mining and industry while their wives, sisters, and daughters stayed home manning the farms. In the cities, domestic workers freed white women to enter the labor force in highly skilled service jobs in commerce and industry. Domestic and agricultural labor accounted for 91% of the economically active female population (from 1960-1970).

Farm laborers received \$12 per week for 12-hour days, 7 days a week. The laws of the farmer tenant system restricted movement making it very difficult for people to leave this situation. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) estimated that women provided 60-80% of agricultural labor (from the U.N. Role of Women in African Labor). Thus the reduced land area under the 1913 Natives Land Act reduced women's productivity the most, curtailing their primary survival mechanisms and source of power. Women did fieldwork with their hands: tilling, sowing, weeding, harvesting and threshing. Women worked from 5 AM to 1 PM and then would fetch water, grind grain into flour, prepare meals and wash babies, all from Monday through Saturday. National and multi-national corporations paid wages below the Poverty Line justified by the false claim that women and children living in the reserves farmed their own subsistence. In fact this was not the case: in 1970, 98% of families in the Transkei (largest Bantustan) possessed inadequate land for self-sufficiency.

“I have been a slave all my life” –Domestic Servant, January, 1979

Domestic workers were the most exploited of an already heavily exploited labor force. With the threat of termination at the slightest deviation from their employers' whims domestic workers had limited to no bargaining rights for salary or raises and no social security benefits. Jacklyn Cock explored this in her 1980 study on domestic workers in 225 South African households. All domestic workers studied were born in the Eastern Cape and migrated to the city.

“I'm just a rubbish tin for them” (Cock 1989:27)

While the pattern in Europe was “life-cycle servants” where lower-class women often served as maids in their early 20s before moving onto marriage and their own families, the pattern in South Africa was “life-long servants” (Cock 1989:17). Over 50% of domestic workers were employed full-time at their employers' home. Despite this, over ¼ of the study's domestic workers did not know their salary in advance and only 7/157 full-time workers got a regular yearly increase. Only 12% were paid overtime. ¾ earned less than 30 Rand/month. In 1972 the average monthly wage in Cape Town was 28.93 Rand (conversion currently is around 7 Rand to the dollar). The average hourly wage for these women was 11 cents. Over 50% began work between 6 and 7 AM, only 20% stopped work after 9 PM. 99.9% worked more than 48 hours/week, the average workweek was 73 hours and 35 minutes. 83.4% worked on public holidays and only 40% were paid during *their* annual holiday.

“The smell of meat must be enough for me” (Cock 1989:26).

Low wages were justified by the idea that African living is cheaper, work is unskilled, payment is made “in kind” and that their wage was only “pocket money.” The various tasks of these women's work were not unskilled and included cleaning, ordering and cooking food, manning the telephone, childcare, laundry, ironing and organization of the household. “In kind” payment was either food (often leftovers) used clothing or uniforms. Often these leftovers would

have been thrown away and were not the same food as the employer's. 48% of workers received no meat at all though they cooked meat for their employer's 2-3 times/day.

“We leave our children early in the morning to look after other women's families and still they don't appreciate us.”

Over ½ of domestic workers were the sole breadwinners for their families, which averaged 5.5 dependants. 78% of workers were married at some point but only 48% were still married. Husbands and children were not allowed to stay over in the employer's home on pain of fine for both parties. One such reported fine for employers in 1979 amounted to 500 Rand.

While 63% of domestic workers had been to school, ¾ had not progressed beyond standard five and no one had gone past standard eight. Domestic workers did not want their children to have their job stating that they hoped they would be white-collar workers. To this end, they invested a lot of their income in their children's education. In the 48 cases where domestics had children in school only 8 said their employer regularly helped them with school expenses.

In no situation in the Eastern Cape did the domestic worker feel she was one of the employer's family. Paternalism seemed to dominate the relationship though 80% of workers said they discussed their personal or family problems with their employer. Domestic workers gave different answers about what their employers felt towards *them*:

“She wears a mask with me.”

“She has no feelings for me I am of use to her, that's all.”

“I think she feels for me although it's difficult to be sure. It's not something that you can see and touch.”

III.) *Missionaries and Explorers*

“His vigor and powers of endurance, mental and bodily, his indifference to pain, hardship, and fatigue...rendered him an admirable geographical pioneer”

-Description of Explorer John Ledyard (Livingstone 1858:435).

In the 18th century, many European and American explorers set out for the African frontier backed by the British Government, London Missionary Society, or the African Association (founded in 1788 by twelve gentlemen of London's upper-class). The African Association supported “men of enterprise” (Livingstone 1858:435) in exploring the African continent. American John Ledyard was the first selected and he began (in 1788) to cross the widest area of the African continent. David Livingstone, another famous medical missionary and explorer, arrived in South Africa in 1841. Livingstone was famous as a laborer for “discovery and civilization,” in land “hitherto untrodden by the foot of the white man” (Livingstone 1858:v). His writing on “geology, meteorology, zoology, and history” served as a “compass” for the British Government.

“The country, too being bushy, favored their wicked doings, as it afforded a secure cover for their diminutive bodies”

--Reverend Edwards (Comaroff 1991:174).

Missionary writing by the late 19th century became a popular European literary genre similar to travel and exploration writings that “titillated the Western imagination with glimpses of radical otherness” (Comaroff 1991:172). Accounts had a “personalized epic form,” an autobiography of “heroism” which usually began with a journey away from civilization to “regions beyond.” The vast open landscape overwhelmed British minds, accustomed to gated gardens and “the British ideal of spatial order” (Comaroff, 1991:174). The missionaries often invoked a Biblical metaphor to record their view, comparing Africa to the “sojourn in Sinai” (Comaroff, 1991:175). The surrounding landscape, though perceived by Europeans as “desert,” was already rich with trade and social conflict.

“Now we were completely in their power, and we who had been so long unaccustomed to hear any other human voices but our own, felt strange at this confusion of tongues”

—John Campbell (Comaroff 1991:182).

Mission societies monitored their agents in the field through their European constituents’ “detailed and introspective reports” (Comaroff, 1991:183). Missionaries offered lookingglasses as gifts to the natives to impose a European way of seeing and being. Intelligence was determined based on African reaction to their reflection. Writes one missionary Moffet: “How many see their faces as in a glass and straightaway forget!” (Comaroff 1991:187). Telescopes, clocks and pocket compasses were other gifts and indispensable tools for missionaries and explorers, as they sought to navigate an uncharted landscape, and compose a colonial map for future generations.

“No where are...systems of difference in greater jeopardy then on the imperial frontier” (Comaroff 1991:195).

The European African confrontation was economically and religiously based but also erotic. Missions strongly reinforced taboos against inter-racial intimacy but were not always obeyed. One Reverend Read was said to have become a “recluse in the desert” in order to escape the London Missionary Society’s wrath at his fathering a child by a black woman. His breached taboo was significant not only because of adultery but by its breaking of the European imposed caste

system, creating a new “half-caste product” of mixed race.

IV.) *Sangomas and Hybrid Healers*

“The point is not whether I believe [in spirits]...the point is that I have made people believe in me as a carrier of such manifestations, and that I must not fail them”

-Wim van Binsbergen (from “Becoming a Sangoma”)

Sangomas are traditional healers in South Africa’s Nguni societies (Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swazi). Sangomas are not lesser or untrained doctors but healers who creatively synthesize diverse worldviews and practices combining medication, dialogue, and spiritual diagnosis. African healers have regional and national networks of support. Janzen writes that South Africa has a higher degree of “mixing and cross-fertilization” than anywhere else in Africa (Janzen 1992:175). The Kwame (Legwama) Traditional Association of Botswana provides traditional healers with a support system including assistance gaining game trophies prohibited by governmental poaching laws. Leopard skins especially possess great healing power (and signal a senior sangoma) but can only be attained by a Botswana government permit.

“Becoming a sangoma is an act of atonement, and of deliberate humility”

-Wim van Binsbergen

Becoming a sangoma is like learning a language; it’s meaningless without context. Many sangomas are called by ancestors to become healers; they are chosen. Often a serious illness is an indication that the patient themselves should become a healer in order to channel the ancestor’s force to help others. Anthropologist Binsbergen writes that becoming a sangoma is “one of the greatest achievements of humanity, combining display of self and loss of self, past and present, detachedly applied performative skills and hazardous abandon” (Binsbergen, 1991:321). During periods of training and initiation, a sangoma might wear sacred cloths, bead necklaces and bracelets while enacting taboos and prescriptions on food, bodily care, sexuality and ritual. The period of initiation varies by group but a healer may learn how to recognize and dig up major sangoma medicines, read divination tablets, enact ritual dances, and perform public rites. Binsbergen emphasizes that an “ancestor’s empowerment” or “charisma” is more important than technical skill. Becoming a sangoma is the opposite of ten years of medical school. Charisma and the ability to improvise and adapt based on participants is much more important than academic or clinical training.

“[Healing is] realignment of the natural and the supernatural”

-Wim van Binsbergen

Healing as a discipline lends itself to hybridity as sangomas employ a mixture of solutions to see what works. Healers may use herbs for physical symptoms as well as discussion about the patient’s personal history and emotional state. The use of spirits, far from obscuring practicalities of everyday life sets up a framework that allows many kinds of perspectives and theories to work together, addressing interaction of an individual and his/her community. The combination of “common sense” medical treatment with “spirit fields” to enact personal transformation is similar to Western self-help institutions like Alcoholics Anonymous, Weight Watchers, or Parents Anonymous (Janzen 1992:177). Discourse and dialogue are important parts of being a sangoma, a holistic mode of healing embracing mental, physical and societal health.

V.) *Crime and Xenophobia*

“We are scared to the point where we are no longer free”

–Max Price, Vice Chancellor, University of Cape Town (Economist 2010:12).

South Africa is a country constantly obsessed with crime. The World Competitiveness Survey recently rated South Africa as worst for crime out of 133 countries. A 2010 Economist article reported that 50 murders, 100 rapes, 330 armed robberies and 550 violent assaults are recorded in the country every day. In another recent poll, nearly 2/3 of South Africans said they felt “very unsafe” walking alone after dark in their neighborhood and a 2007 study found that 22% of people had experienced crime personally the previous year. Foreigners have been some of the most frequent victims. South Africa hosts 8-9 million illegal immigrants including 3 million from Zimbabwe. In May 2008, xenophobic attacks against African foreigners left 62 dead and 670 injured with spontaneous attacks continuing afterward. Xenophobia is also rampant in the workplace where immigrants compete with locals for jobs, health care, and housing.

The law enforcement to protect citizens and immigrants appears largely absent. Since 1996 the government has almost tripled spending on tackling crime but private security for gated communities has risen even faster with 300,000 private security guards across the country, almost double the nation’s total police force” (Economist 2010:12). Though murder rates have supposedly halved in recent years, the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation argues that this is based on police manipulation of numbers to keep up with the government’s 2004 pledge to cut crime 7-10% each year. In reality, 568 people were shot dead by police in 2008-9, including 32 innocent bystanders. 107 police officers were killed during the same period (Economist 2010:13). Clearly, the police force is not necessarily the best mode of violence prevention.

“The trek of many thousands who come to find work, and for whom there will be little possibility of finding it. When the humiliation of begging fails, desperation offers one way to survive—crime”

–Nadine Gordimer, Novelist (Steinberg 2001:1).

In 2008, ¾ of South Africans had incomes below 50,000 rand per year (around 7,439 US dollars) of these 83% were black and only 6.5 % white (Economist 2010:11). Poverty will always be an instigator of crime when other options appear bleak but it is not the only answer. Sociologist Jonny Steinberg examines why poverty breeds violent crime in certain areas and not others. He argues that the South African crime wave is “intimately bound up with a crisis in the relationship between adults and youths” (Steinberg 2001:3) and that crime is not always about earning a living but about “lifestyle” predicated on group membership shaped by similar “ethics, values, and tastes” (Steinberg, 2001:4). He compares current gangs to anti-apartheid youth organizations of the 1980s and emphasizes the “politics” behind crime today.

“We [as South Africans] are preoccupied with revenge; we worry that it will burst its walls” –Jonny Steinberg, (Steinberg: 2001:2).

When the ANC took over in the first non-racial election, the new government emphasized continuity and so apartheid policemen, who had formerly gunned down township youth, kept their jobs in the new non-racialized system. Steinberg argues that perhaps the famous “peaceful” transition in South Africa to democracy was not so placid and that a quiet rage of suppression and inequality continues to manifest itself through the politics of crime. Indeed, the crime circuits that exist today only continue with the help of corrupt insider officials. Now, it seems it is the entire government’s job to combat crime and not just a specialized (and weakened) police force. As Jonny Steinberg writes: “organized crime is only as strong as a state is weak” (Steinberg

2001:12).

VI.) *Music and Language*

South Africa has 11 official languages and under the current constitution, every citizen is guaranteed the right to live and learn in his or her own language which include:

Afrikaans
English
IsiNdebele
isiZulu
IsiXhosa
Sesotho sa Leboa
Sesotho
Setswana
siSwati
Tshivenda
and
Xitsonga.

isiZulu is the mother tongue of most of the population followed by isiXhosa, then Afrikaans, Sesotho sa Leboa, and finally Setswana and English.

Knowing You contains 5 songs in 2 different languages:

“Andikuthandi” (Cell Phone Song)—IsiXhosa

“The Lion Sleeps Tonight” (originally “Mbube”)—English

“Isiponono”—isiXhosa

“The Mill Wheel” (translated from German by Harry Dexter)—English

“S’fudula abaTswana”—IsiXhosa

The Songs

Translated on February 24th, 2011 by Professor Zoliswa Mali at Boston University

“The Cell Phone Song”

Andikuthandi selul’andikufuni
Wen’ uchith’ umzi wami
Ingxaki zezi sms

Men: Uze nes’moko jo

Uze nes’moko vodacom umjojo
Uze nes’moko MTN umjojo
Uze nes’moko cell c’yasibambisa

Translation:

Cell phone, I don’t want you, I don’t like you.
You are breaking up my family and home.
The trouble or problem is these text messages.

Men: You have brought trouble, dude.

You have brought trouble vodacom.
You have brought trouble MTN.
You have brought trouble cell c; you are causing us to be imprisoned.

“The Lion Sleeps Tonight” by The Tokens

In the jungle, the mighty jungle
The lion sleeps tonight
In the jungle the quiet jungle
The lion sleeps tonight

Near the village the peaceful village
The lion sleeps tonight
Near the village the quiet village
The lion sleeps tonight

Hush my darling don't fear my darling
The lion sleeps tonight
Hush my darling don't fear my darling
The lion sleeps tonight

“Isiponono”

Ndinesiponono saseThekwi', Ndinesiponono saseThekwi' x2
Wi wi wi...

Translation: I have my cutie (girlfriend); she comes from Durban.

“S'fudula abaTswana”

Sfudul' abaTswana S'fudula wena x2
Sigile, Sigile, Sigile

(Men: Sikhulu' abaTswana bayawele)

Translation:

We chase these people away (Botswana)
And we'll do it to you too
We bump, we bump, we bump.

(Men: Just go. We've released them and they are crossing the borders.)

THE DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA & DANCE
BARE BODKIN
PRESENT

KNOWING YOU

A SENIOR HONORS THESIS

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
CLAIRE REDFIELD



MARCH 14TH AND 15TH
BALCH ARENA THEATER
8PM
FREE

Thank You:

I have so many people to thank for this production it is hard to know where to begin. Thank you to my wonderful advisors/mentors Rosalind Shaw, David Guss and Sheriden Thomas, for challenging my thoughts and fostering my creativity every step of the way. A special thank you to Nani Agbeli for choreographing the final dance, Zachary Solomon for drumming, Meron Langsner for fight consult, Zoliswa Mali for translating/correcting the isiXhosa songs and Andrew Kluger for transcribing the music. Thank you to Ted Simpson, Margo Caddell, Penny Pinette, John Mulligan, Joanne Barnett, Meredith Miller, Downing Cless, Barbara Grossman and the entire Tufts Drama Department faculty for your never-ending support. A big thank you to Bare Bodkin, Dean Carmen Lowe, and the Undergraduate Research Fund for additional funding and to Robert Gottlieb for designing the poster. Thank you to Sam Allen and MayaBea Schechner for tango instruction, Syndey Post for ushering, and Esti Bernstein for mentoring. Thank you to my Thesis Girls, Abby, and my wonderful cast and crew for staying present in this process every day and helping to bring my dream to life. Thank you to Sabrina Lazarus, Zachary Fit Mundi, my roommates, friends, and Mom and Dad for your love and support.

Most of all for the real Elizabeth:
Thank you.

QuickTime® and a
plugin are needed to see this picture.

Cast/Crew

Elizabeth	Aline Gue
Melanie (her daughter)	Khadijah Hall
Rowland	Bradley Starr
Mundi	Amish Bhatia
Amy	JT Vancollie
Police Officer/Voice Over/Clyde	Jack Esposito
Olga	Erica Goldstein
Ensemble Dancers	Makala Noble, Natalie Perry, MayaBea Schechner
Drummer	Zachary Solomon
Stage Manager	Abby Setterholm
Assistant Stage Manager	MayaBea Schechner
Lighting Designer	Max Thaler
Sound Designer	Mitchell Mosk
Choreographer	Nani Agbeli
Fight Captain	JT Vancollie

The Department of Drama and Dance and
Bare Bodkin
Present:

Knowing You

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY:
CLAIRE REDFIELD

A SENIOR HONORS THESIS

Co-sponsored by The Undergraduate Research Fund

*The show will run approximately one hour with no intermission.

* Any proceeds collected during the performance will go to the Etafeni Trust, a community-run centre for children affected by AIDS and their caregivers in the township of Nyanga outside Cape Town, South Africa.

Amish Bhatia (Mundi) is a senior majoring in Quantitative Economics and Philosophy. He was last seen in *The Alchemist* as Tribulation Wholesome directed by Lawrence Senelick. This is his last show in the Arena at Tufts University, and he would like to thank the audience and everyone involved in the production.

Jack Esposito (Voice Over/Police Officer/Clyde) is a senior majoring in International Relations. He is also very, very classy, just like this bio.

Erica Goldstein (Olga) is a sophomore majoring in Engineering Science and Biology and minoring in Entrepreneurial Leadership. She wants to go into public health after leaving Tufts, and would like to thank her family.

Aline Gue (Elizabeth) is a junior majoring in International Relations with a concentration in Ideologies. She would like to thank her friends for encouraging her to audition for this production. It has been a great experience.

Khadijah Hall (Melanie) is a junior majoring in American Studies and Entrepreneurial Leadership Studies. Playing the character of Melanie, this is her fourth theater performance at Tufts, others include “Vagina Monologues”, “The Little Shop of Horrors” and “For Colored Girls Who have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf”.

Mitchell Mosk (Sound Designer) is a freshman majoring in Psychology with a minor in Music Engineering. He technically owns his own recording studio.

Makala Noble (Ensemble) is a junior majoring in Computer Science and minoring in Music. She has been dancing with Kiniwe for 5 semesters and has loved singing since she was a little girl. This is her first time participating in an Arena production, and she hopes you enjoy the show!

Natalie Perry (Ensemble) is a junior here at Tufts majoring in Engineering Physics. This is her first production, though she has been a part of the African Dance program for two semesters. Natalie is an active member of the Society of Physics Students and the Tufts Women's Rugby Football Club.

Claire Redfield (Director) is a senior double majoring in Drama and Anthropology. She spent last fall in London studying acting at the British American Drama Academy and spring in Cape Town, South Africa pursuing Anthropology through the University of Chicago. This is her senior thesis and first full-length play.

MayaBea Schechner (Ensemble) is a freshman who has not yet decided her major. She loves theatre--onstage, offstage, and backstage--and is also on the Tufts Ballroom Dance team.

Abby Setterholm (Stage Manager) is a freshman thinking about majoring in International Relations with a minor in Drama. In her spare time she enjoys Irish Dancing and watching *Dr. Who* with her friends. She would like to thank Claire for this amazing opportunity, and the cast/ensemble for all their hard work.

Bradley Starr (Rowland) is a senior majoring in Political Science and Philosophy with a minor in Italian and is grateful for the opportunity to perform in the arena again before graduation. Previous roles include CB in *Dog Sees God* and Bradley Starr in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. Special thanks to the cast and crew for making this such a rewarding and fun experience, to my family, and to the ladies and gentlemen of 19 Teele Ave.

Max Thaler (Lighting design) is a sophomore majoring in Theater Engineering. He is frequently seen around campus in a poncho and wizard hat.

JT Vancollie (Amy) is a junior Drama and Psych major (and proud RA). She was very saddened that she could not be in the stage fight, but thanks Meron for electing her as fight captain.

Director's Note

“apartheid” comes from the Afrikaans word for “apartness”

between you and me

how desperately

how it aches

how desperately it aches between you and me...

how long does it take for a voice to reach another

in this country held bleeding between us

–Antjie Krog (Afrikaans poet) from “Country of Grief and Grace”

Dear Audience,

I have received many questions over the course of writing this play but three of the most frequent have been: what are these characters Melanie and Rowland? Why doesn't Melanie speak? What is the message of your play? The first two I will try to answer now, the last one is for you to decide.

I conceive of my play as a palimpsest: a board where words are written and erased and written and erased but each time traces of each previous layer remain, peeking through. My play takes place in two different realities: present day South Africa where Amy arrives and meets Mundi and Elizabeth, and Elizabeth's dream reality of Cape Town between 1989 and 2010. As Elizabeth tells Amy the story of her life, she re-imagines her real daughter Melanie as a silent figure and her real future son-in-law Rowland as a hybrid colonial

explorer and tourist frat boy. The space of Elizabeth's memory is cool and tinged blue; she relives the most painful moments of her life in order to share them and connect with Amy in the present day.

But still, you may well ask, why doesn't her daughter Melanie speak? Where is her power in all this? Melanie does have a voice, she welcomes you through the fire speech into the world of the play, but from that moment on her voice is muted. This is because I am interested in the historical traces left on Melanie's body paralleling the traces left on South Africa as a country manipulated and oppressed by a colonial past. As Walter Benjamin writes: “The nourishing fruit of the historically understood contains time as a precious but tasteless seed.” What can we hear in Melanie's silence? What can we find in the richness of this “precious but tasteless seed”?

Ultimately, my play is not just about silences but about forging connection and communication, something I believe to be the aim of all art and especially theatre. Can we sit in a darkened room for an hour and put ourselves aside to be fully present, together, for someone else's story? South African playwright Athol Fugard describes Pascal and Camus' view of the human condition as a prison where we each sit chained together; every morning the door opens and one person is taken out and executed. Fugard asks:

“What do we do during those 24 hours between the opening and closing of the door? Do we cry? Or do we tap the next person in the chain and say ‘What's your name? I'm Athol Fugard. Who are you?’ And that's how we create meaning. At the end of my process you are waiting.”

“Knowing You” is my tap on your shoulder. Now the discussion has begun it's your turn. Let me know what you think.

Love,
Claire

Brief Dramaturgy

Apartheid Laws:

The Natives Land Act of 1913 left 71% of the population (the non-white portion) to live on only 13.5% of the land. The 1950 Population Registration Act classified all South Africans as White, Coloured, Bantu (Black African) or Other. The Bantu Education Act (1953) limited blacks' education to a "Natives Curriculum" basically preparing students for manual labor.

"'White person' means a person who in appearance obviously is, or who is generally accepted as a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a 'coloured person'"

-From Section XV of "Population Registration Act of 1950."

Women and Domestic Workers:

In the cities, heavily exploited domestic workers freed white women to enter the labor force. These domestics worked around 73 hour weeks with minimal pay, little to no vacations, and no social security benefits. White employers justified low wages with "in kind" payment of extra food scraps, used clothing, and uniforms. Domestic workers were often the sole breadwinners for large families and continued menial labor in hopes their children would finish school and rise to white-collar jobs. So much time away from home often divided families permanently as domestic's husbands and children were never allowed to stay at their employer's homes and domestics themselves were gone from early morning to late at night.

"The smell of meat must be enough for me"

"We leave our children early in the morning to look after other women's families and still they don't appreciate us.

"I think she feels for me although it's difficult to be sure. It's not something that you can see and touch."

-Domestic Worker Quotes from Jacklyn Cock's 1979 Cape Town Study

Missionaries and Explorers:

In the 18th century, many European and American explorers set out for the African frontier backed by the British Government, London Missionary Society, or the African Association (founded in 1788 by twelve gentlemen of London's upper-class). Missionary and explorer writing in the late 19th century became a popular European literary genre like travel novels, accounts were personal and had an epic autobiographical quality. Such missionaries often offered lookingglasses as gifts to the natives to determine intelligence. Missions strictly reinforced taboos against inter-racial intimacy but were not always obeyed. Missionaries who were intimate with the "natives" were rejected permanently by European society.

Sangomas and Hybrid Healers:

Sangomas are traditional healers in South Africa's Nguni societies (Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swazi). Sangomas are not lesser or untrained doctors but healers who creatively synthesize diverse worldviews and practices combining medication, dialogue, and spiritual diagnosis. The combination of "common sense" medical treatment with "spirit fields" to enact personal transformation is similar to Western self-help institutions like Alcoholics Anonymous, Weight Watchers, or Parents Anonymous. Leopard skins possess great healing power and signal a senior sangoma but are prohibited under state poaching laws except by permit.

Crime and Xenophobia:

A 2010 Economist article reported 50 murders, 100 rapes, 330 armed robberies and 550 violent assaults in South Africa every day. Foreigners have been some of the most frequent victims. South Africa hosts 8-9 million illegal immigrants including 3 million from Zimbabwe. In May 2008, xenophobic attacks against African foreigners left 62 dead and 670 injured with spontaneous attacks continuing afterward. 568 people were shot dead by police in 2008-9, including 32 innocent bystanders. When the ANC took over in the first non-racial election, the new government emphasized continuity and so apartheid policemen, who had formerly gunned down township youth, kept their jobs in the new non-racialized system.

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